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BIRMINGHAM AND BRUSSELS.

modern subject. Again we must refer to Ruskin; it will be remembered that he urged our modern artists not to seek for subjects in the realms of fiction or imagination, but to set down, for the benefit of future generations, the everyday facts of our everyday life: we cannot help thinking that Mr. Gere had the great critic's dicta on historical painting in mind, when he gave us all the elaborate details of one of the most popular social functions of our day. An artist must always run the risk of being charged with banality, when he undertakes a picture of this nature, but Mr. Gere escapes this danger by his skilfully artistic interpretation of the most trivial and commonplace accessories. The colour scheme is mellow and harmonious and the composition admirable.

Mr. Jonathan Pratt, M., has been so indefatigable in his duties as secretary of the Society, that he has had little time for painting this year. He contributed, however, a characteristic little genre picture entitled *A Shepherd's Fireside*, which has not suffered from any undue haste or lack of care. Mr. Claude Pratt sent three canvases, the best of which is a well-composed, bright little picture called *A Message from the Sea*. This artist is also well represented in the 'Art Circle,' which, with the Easel Club, has been incorporated in the exhibition this year, but we must reserve our criticism of these interesting little shows for a future occasion.

Colonel C. T. Burt has seldom given us a better work than *Market Day*; some cattle being driven down a cliff path to market, give a *raison d'être* for the title, but they are nevertheless quite a minor episode. The strength of the picture lies in the convincing painting of sea, marsh and sky. *Derbyshire Moorlands*, a charming landscape, and *Cambrian Railway*, are also worthy examples of his art.

Mr. J. V. Jelley's work is always notable for its sympathetic quality, and his beautiful little picture *Nightfall* will amply maintain his reputation.

We noticed with pleasure some very promising portraits from the brush of Mr. Herbert Gibbs, a local artist who has studied first at the School of Art and then with Professor Herkomer. He is at present very naturally somewhat markedly under the influence of the latter master.

Still, his work gives evidence of considerable purpose and individuality.

The Art Union has made a good selection for its first prize in the picture by Wellesley Cottrell, called *After Many Storms*. The artist is to be congratulated on the power with which he has rendered the waters gathering into a torrent, an undoubtedly difficult subject.

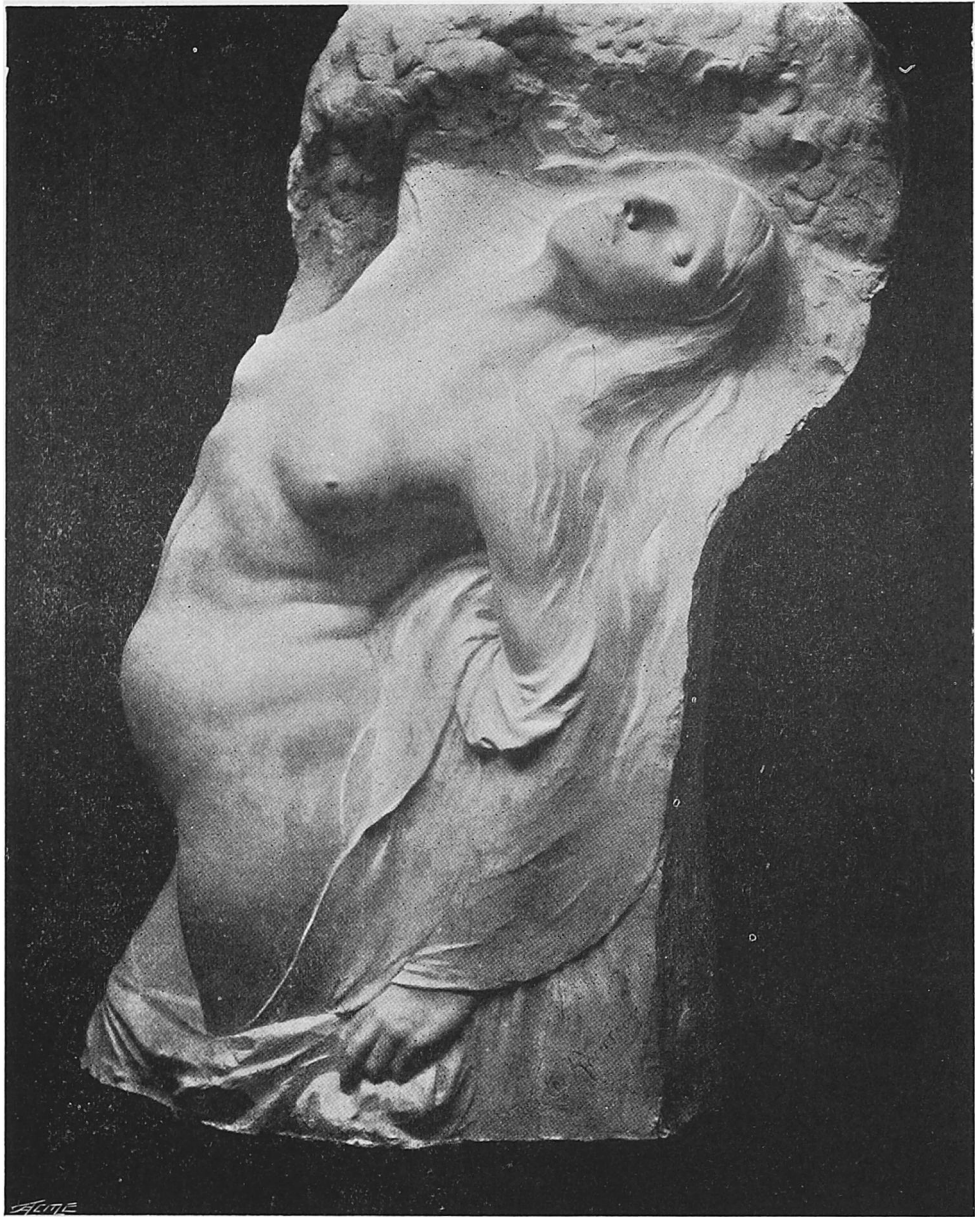
We have unfortunately exhausted our space, though much more might fairly be said in praise of one of the most interesting all-round exhibitions we have had here for some time.

BRUSSELS.—M. Victor Rousseau has some little time ago held an exhibition of some of his works at the *Cercle Artistique*. To those who had any doubts as to M. Rousseau's position in the art world, this exhibition gave clear evidence that he must be considered one of the greatest masters of modern sculpture. He combines supreme power of execution with a grand style and with a profound poetic, serene and strong imagination. His *Puberté*, *Danse Antique*, his busts, his group of two lovers, lost in sad contemplation, are all works of great distinction. Victor Rousseau's name cannot fail to become a household word among those who take any interest in the fine arts.

THE PARIS SALONS. SCULPTURE AND DECORATIVE ART

IN sculpture at the Salons all interest centres on Rodin's *Victor Hugo*. In decoration, the exhibits have at least the merit of opening up a very wide field of discussion. Were it possible to deal at full length with the question here, I doubt whether much satisfaction would be eventually derived from the study of the general tendencies shown by modern decoration at the Salons. The first thing that must strike an unbiassed mind, is the fact that some essential difference, of what exact nature it would be a curious but laborious study to determine, exists between the modern decorative artist and his predecessors. Possibly the explanation may be that the present age has both the set purpose

ART CENTRES



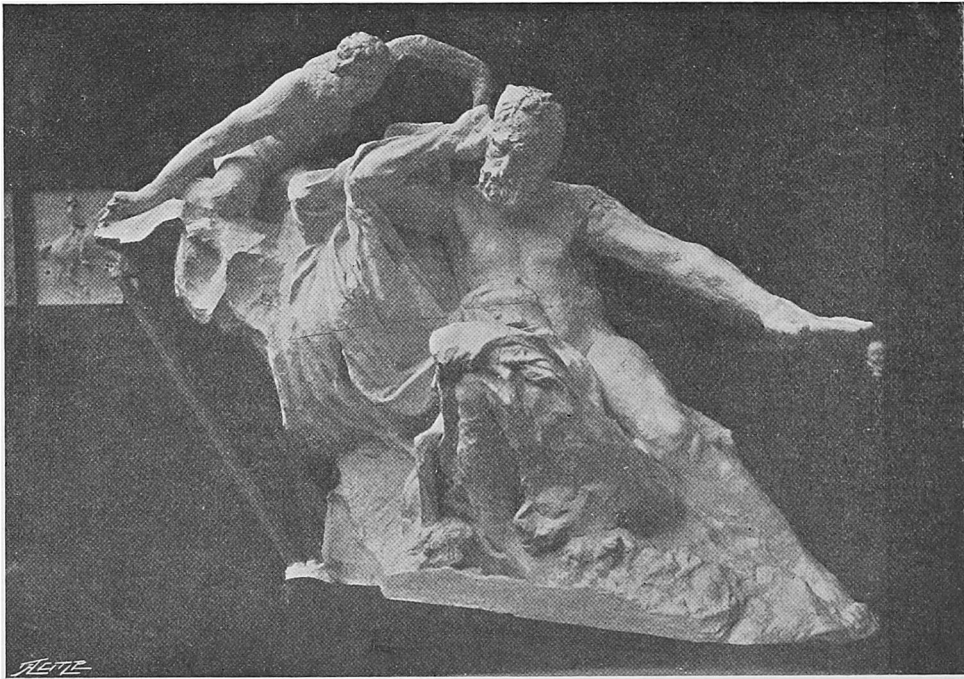
'PUBERTÉ'
BY VICTOR ROUSSEAU, BRUSSELS

of striving after a style of its own and the consciousness of its effort. Yet is it a proven fact that the distinctive styles of previous ages were wholly unconscious growths? On the other hand, the artist of to-day may be handicapped by his knowledge of the past, which may have fettered his independence by strengthening to an irresistible degree the instinct of imitation, as well as by producing a persistently self-conscious desire of originality. Again, however, the objection is that the artists of the past

candidly copied each other and cheerfully let their work be copied. The fact remains that some mysterious paralysis possesses the modern decorator, though he makes the wildest efforts to be free, bold, and original.

There is, for example, an immense amount of talent and honest work in the furniture shown at the Salons. But, as a rule, the result attained is beside the mark. Oddly enough, one of the pieces of furniture in which harmony and fitness are most successfully achieved does not appear in

PARIS



VICTOR HUGO MONUMENT
BY A. RODIN

the catalogue and bears no exhibitor's name, and I am almost inclined to believe that it is not an exhibit, but one of the fittings of the Salon. The jewellery deserves special attention, but for the reason that it affords a strikingly instructive example of one of the modern decorator's states of mind—an exceptional one, possibly, but a regrettably frequent exception. The perversions of the 'art jeweller' have grown to monstrous proportions in the present Salons. They are chiefly developed among the Artistes Français, where scores of cases can be diagnosed in a large gallery entirely occupied by works in precious stones and metals, or models for the same. One of the most alarming fads is that of introducing faces and figures, in chiselled metal, enamelled or plain, or in onyx, agate, etc., as ornaments in objects where they are utterly out of place. Moreover, as regards execution, perfunctory and slovenly technique appears to be considered quite good enough for the end to be attained. Another of the 'art jeweller's' sins is pretentious extravagance of design. Every species of animal, natural or fabulous, is utilised in the most incongruous way. Bats, chameleons, lizards, serpents, are arranged in contorted positions

round hatpins, necklaces, pendants, etc. Extravagance by no means implies boldness and freedom, and these productions give the impression that the 'art jeweller's' imagination is hopelessly cramped and barren. Two of the most absurd specimens of the style are a model for a large clock, called 'The death of the lily,' in which female figures clasp their hands in grief at the base of the face, while lilies fade and droop over the top, and a set of 'art watches,' ornamented with enormous jewelled spikes and stars, which would effectually defeat every effort made by wearers to read the time on the faces. Not more than half-a-dozen exhibitors show straightforward, simple, and earnest studies of flowers, plants, animals, etc. The most melancholy fact of all, however, is that nearly every one of the 'art jewellery' monstrosities has already been sold, the name of the purchaser being prominently displayed on a large label.

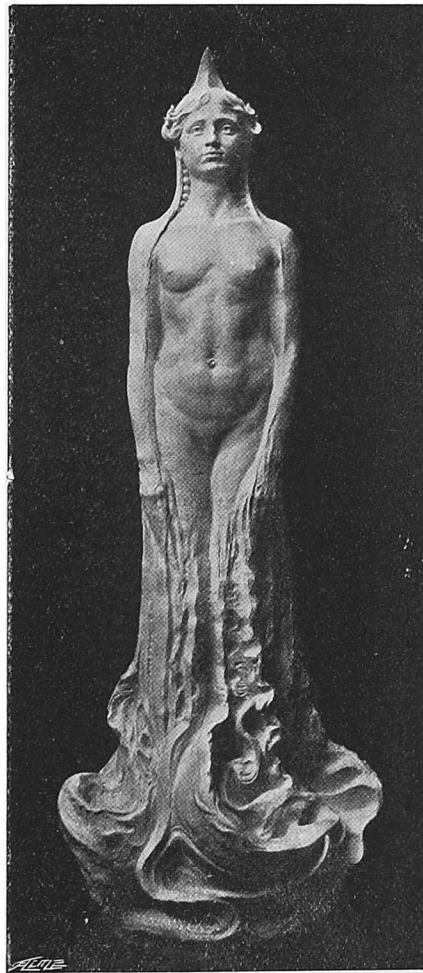
The first impression produced by Rodin's *Victor Hugo*—the central figure, now executed in marble, of the group shown in plaster some years ago—is undoubtedly disconcerting. The nude figure of the poet, which has lost the firm outline of youth, can hardly be called beautiful,

But the head and the attitude of the arms are very fine. One hand is held to the ear, which some faint, far-off sound strikes, the other arm is outstretched, waving away, in an imperative gesture, every importunate influence that might disturb the listening poet. In the plaster model, the Muse is speaking into the poet's ear. But the work, in its present (which may, I understand, possibly be the definitive) form, is almost more expressive. The attitude of passionate attention in the figure of the poet, and the imperious gesture commanding every other voice but that of his inspiration to be silent, are magnificent. The figure above the poet in the illustration, taken from one of the plaster models, does not exist in the marble work, as it at present stands.

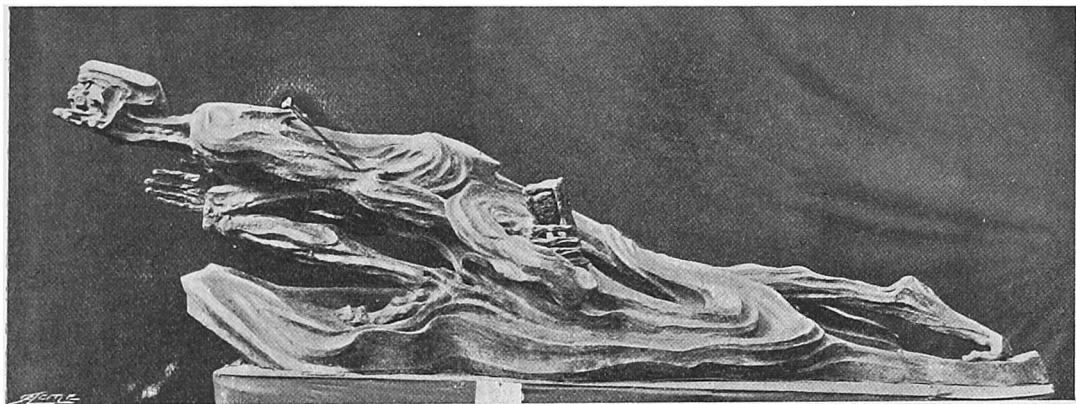
By the side of the Rodin, the rest of the exhibits classified as sculpture lose interest, generally speaking. Among noteworthy exceptions are the heads by M. Fix-Masseau, to which I need not return, as I have already dealt

fully with them some time ago. M. Hansen-Jacobsen sends a statue of *Spring* in his favourite style, the peculiarities of which are, however, less noticeable in this instance than in previous works, as, for example, in the *Shade*, in which the impression of immateriality was rendered by an extraordinary method of treatment, dangerously bordering on mere eccentricity, though undoubtedly producing a strong effect. M. Constantin Meunier's fine rugged figure of a miner, which the artist has done many times before, M. Damp's impressive *Sphinx*, M. Niederhausen-Rodo's study for the Paul Verlaine monument, M. Vallgren's *Douleur*, must also be mentioned. M. de Saint Marceaux' *Alphonse Daudet* is conscientious, but distressingly sentimental, while his *Tomb of Felix Faure* is almost ridiculous, the recumbent figure of the

late president, wrapped in the folds of the tricolour flag, being a masterpiece of the mock heroic, to say nothing of the ludicrous inappropriateness of the artist's design, under the circumstances.



SPRING
BY HANSEN-JACOBSEN



SHADE
BY HANSEN-JACOBSEN

PIERRE ROCHE



BALCONY

M. Pierre Roche's exhibit will be more fitly classified under decoration, as he has, in a very interesting way, combined architecture and sculpture. The arrangement made of his exhibits at the Salon, which is not, of course, definitive, as pieces are placed together which have no relation one to the other, nevertheless shows off the various works well. The balcony, supported by the two women figures with arms upstretched, is particularly remarkable for the boldness of the movement, and for the vigorous simplicity of the treatment. Placed above is one of the luminous masks of which I believe I have already spoken some time ago. Surmounting this is a weather-cock, charmingly airy and graceful. The sculpture below, with the fine swirl of drapery, is, of course, the dancer Loie Fuller. The two medallions are intended for a theatre. In 'objets d'art,' one of the artist's

exhibits is the working out of a very original idea. This is a finely sculptured mask to be worn by motorists instead of the usual frightful spectacles. I shall be interested to know whether M. Roche's application of art to their costume will appeal to automobilists.

I find that, hitherto, I have only mentioned exhibits at the Société Nationale. The truth is that the sculpture, and, generally speaking, the decoration, at the Artistes Français, made a distressingly poor show, though in sculpture, at all events, quantity is not lacking. The only branch of decorative art in which the Artistes Français have an important exhibition is jewellery, in spite of the fact that they certainly hold the record this year for the display of the very worst forms of false taste, alluded to above. But, at the same time, Lalique shows at the 'Old Salon,' and Lalique this year has

LALIQUE'S INFLUENCE

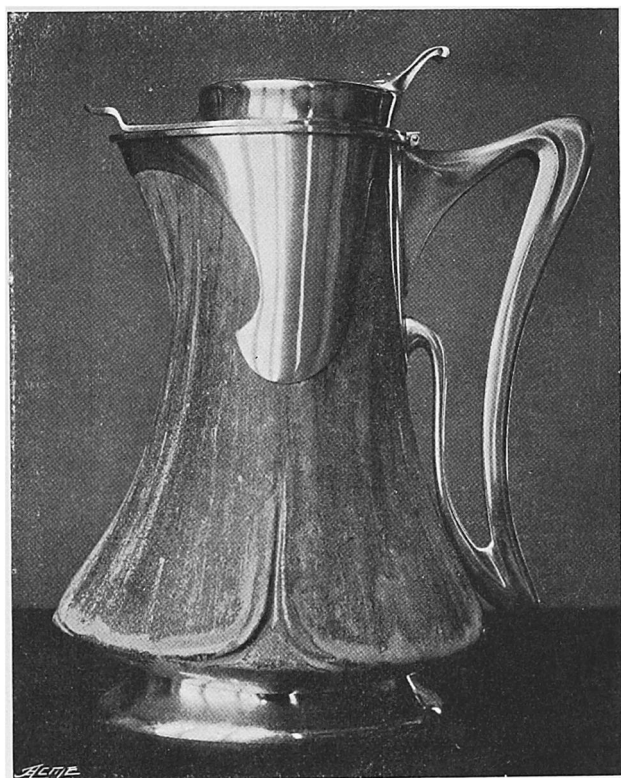


MOUNTED VASE
BY R. LINZELER

atoned for his past sins, among which, by the way, the most deplorable has been his influence on fellow 'art jewellers.' His present show is a lesson to his imitators. Of late his work had been setting a bad example for insincerity of idea and carelessness of workmanship. This year, his plain, straightforward studies from nature are admirable. His pendants, sprays, necklaces, etc., in which branches of elder, wisteria, and of a tree with slender, pale green foliage and dark bluish green cone-shaped seeds, a species which I am ashamed to confess I do not know, are exquisitely simple, and of irreproachable workmanship. The case in which M. Lalique shows his jewels is equally good, the four glass sides being merely supported by four serpents in crystal, which are most effective. M. Lalique, by the way, is so nervous about his designs (which I understand he sells to the jewellery trade) being copied—so I heard from him—that he declines to allow

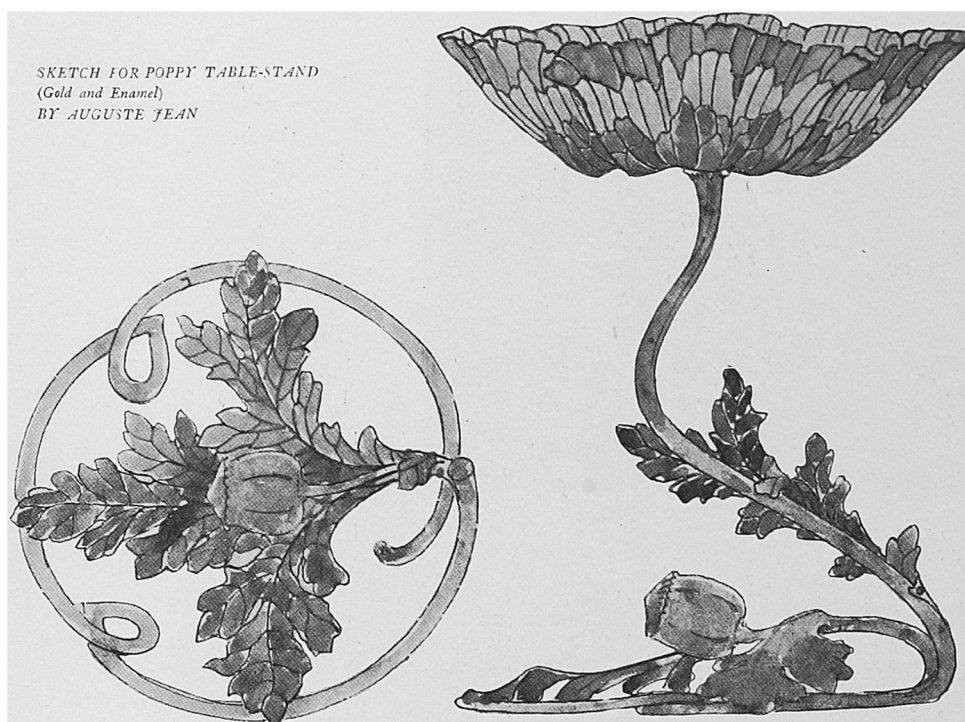
illustrations of them to circulate among the too numerous readers of *THE ARTIST*.

It will be considerate not to mention the names of the exhibitors of the Dying Lily clock, the 'art watches,' and so on. Among interesting work are the exhibits of M. Feuillâtre, already described in a previous article. M. R. Linzeler has some very good examples of pottery and gold and silversmith work combined. In the two vases, the design is more ambitious, but, on the whole, I prefer the coffee-pot, in which the arrangement of the silver handle, lid and foot, and plates of the metal, laid on each side over the pot of a greyish earthenware, slightly streaked, is new and effective. M. Auguste Jean is one of the few jewellers who shows a simple study from nature. His double poppy on its stem is a fine piece of work. The mauve and red flower is in enamel, veined with gold. The green leaves are worked in the same way. The stalk and seed are in pale greenish gold. In M. Charles Boutet de Monvel's work, I think the best effects are those which he has obtained by combining mother of pearl with silver, as in the



MOUNTED JUG
BY R. LINZELER.

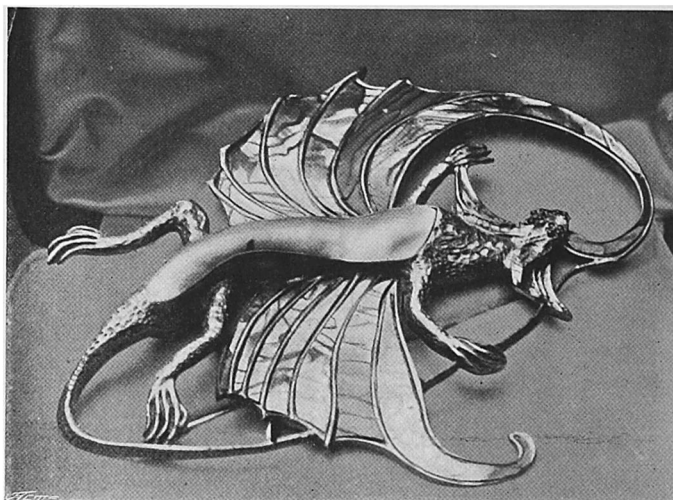
JEWELLERY



three brooches, in which the shell design is good. M. Dufrène has some lamps and a clock in metal, either of a dull greenish colour or yellow, and in commendably simple designs of plants, twined for example round the high pedestal of the lamp. Mlle. Lauth-Sand shows some good work in beaten gold, consisting chiefly of plain studies of flowers, admirably rendered. The exact use to which some of these objects could be put, is not, however, quite apparent. M. Gaillard's large metal platter, half in deep darkness, the other half in moonlight, with bats flitting across the sky, the whole being in metals differently enamelled, is interesting. M. Falguières has some extraordinary designs, in which serpents supply the chief motive, for various articles of jewellery. His use of a small enamelled landscape in one of these is, to my mind, a characteristic example of inappropriateness. M. Schneit produces good effect of colour and material by relieving neutral toned earthenware with silver, but his designs are poor.

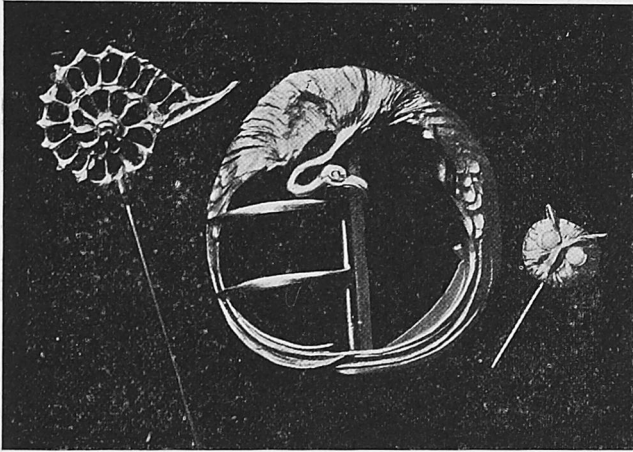
At the Société Nationale, the jewellery exhibit as a whole, while

smaller, shows better taste than that of the Artistes Français. On the other hand, none of Lalique's brilliant, yet simple and very delicate effects are attempted. The prevailing taste is for extreme soberness, and in the hands of art jewellers in this exhibition the gem is losing its primitive interest as a glittering, sparkling thing. The rule is now to keep down your tones and dull the lustre of your precious substances at any cost. Thus, a favourite



A BROOCH
BY BOUËT DE MONVEL

JEWELLERY AT THE SALON



BUCKLE AND PINS
BY BOUTET DE MONVEL

combination is very dull silver, having almost the rugged coarseness of iron, with stones and enamels. The effect produced is strangely rough and hard, though certainly interesting. M.

and pearls. He is most successful in the orchid and peacock pendants, for example, the introduction of heads into the design of two of the objects shown, being, as is frequently the case with such attempts, injudicious. M. Nocq's shell pendant comes out very poorly in illustration, but it is a very interesting piece of work, and his medallions are finely chiselled.

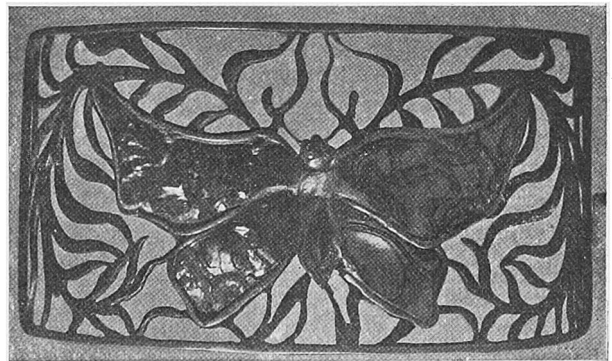
In pewter work, M. Boucher's flagons, cups, etc., from flowers and plants, very simply and vigorously rendered, are among the most interesting exhibits. M. Baffier shows a set of *surtouts* for the table in the same metal, also

closely studied from nature, the value of which is not reduced by the amusing pretentiousness of the artist's announcement that his work is destined to embody 'the familial virtues of the



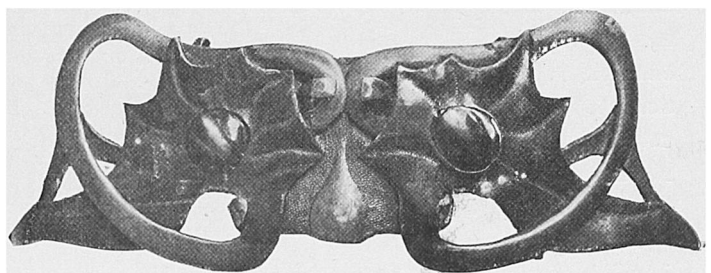
PENDANT
BY HENRI NOCQ

Mangeant's work is the best in this style. M. Rivaud, on the other hand, has some fine brilliant studies of beetles in enamels. M. Lambert's insects and flowers in pale gold and gems are equally good. M. Marcel Bing, M. Nocq, and M. Nau all show effective jewellery. The first-named chiefly combines enamels with gold



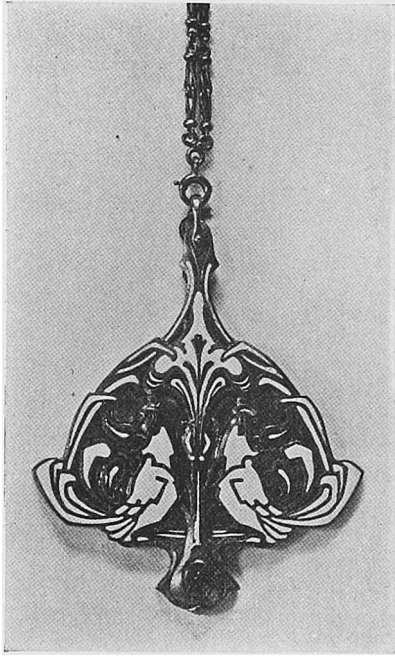
SILVER BUCKLE
BY MANGEANT

men of France,' with many other general concepts. In glass, the Tiffany exhibit is the finest for depth and brilliance of hue, but I regret the absence of any examples of effects in



SILVER BUCKLE
BY MANGEANT

POTTERY



PENDANT BY MA C-L BING
'L'ART NOUVEAU'

transparent material in the collection, all the objects shown being quite opaque, with the familiar metallic lustre. In pottery, M. de Feure's large collection of porcelain is remarkable for the exquisite delicacy of colour and texture obtained rather than, in my opinion, for effectiveness of design. Mr. Grueby has some very

good pots in fine dark greens, with simply and boldly modelled plants spreading up the sides. Mr. Rookwood shows in the same case some pottery in which the design is somewhat similar, but in which pale tints are used, while the texture is smooth and glossy, and the decoration is introduced without relief. M. Pierre Selmersheim's water cistern, a fabulous animal in grey green earthenware, and M. Delaherche's fireplace in bright earthenware with brass, are characteristic and well fitted to their respective

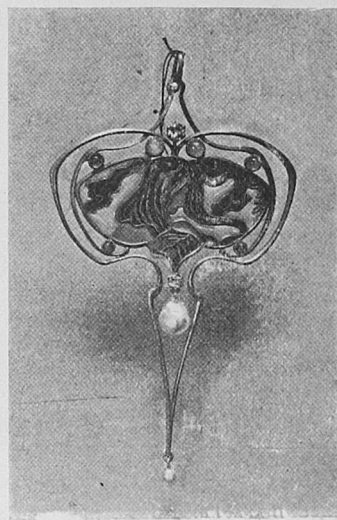


PENDANT BY MARCEL BING
'L'ART NOUVEAU'

uses. In brass work, M. Scheidecker shows some excellent screens, in which a seemingly inappropriate idea for a design—the form of a swan in one instance—is carried out very effectively, by simple treatment and fine workmanship. M. Brindeau de Jarny has also done some very good work in his collection of latches, door handles, hat pegs, etc., in brass, all really interesting. Intextiles, M. Prouvé's ball dress, called *A Stream in Spring*, is the most remarkable exhibit. It has been much talked about, and contains the result of an immense

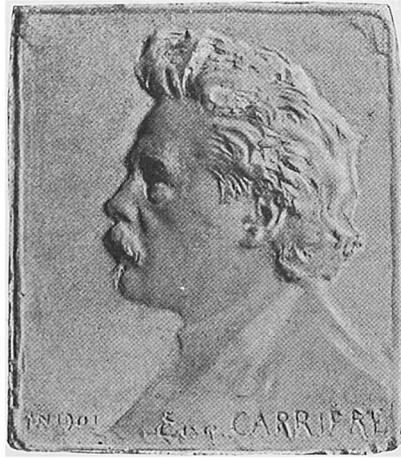


TWO PENDANTS
BY MARCEL BING
'L'ART NOUVEAU'



TEXTILES

amount or labour, but the effect obtained is not quite proportionate, as the mass of detail in the embroidery, which is superbly worked, is confused and heavy, and one cannot help wondering whether, when worn, the gown would possess much grace and beauty of line. The design consists, broadly speaking, of a mass of flowers and plants round the bottom, embroidered over white and pale green silks with gold threads, intended to represent the stream with its ripples, and of a large embroidered motive of ground-work on the bodice. Mme. Ory Robin shows a handsome piece of stuff, hand-painted after a new method, in which the colour is used for the shades and minor tints, the sheen of a brilliant silk being left for the lights which thus acquire

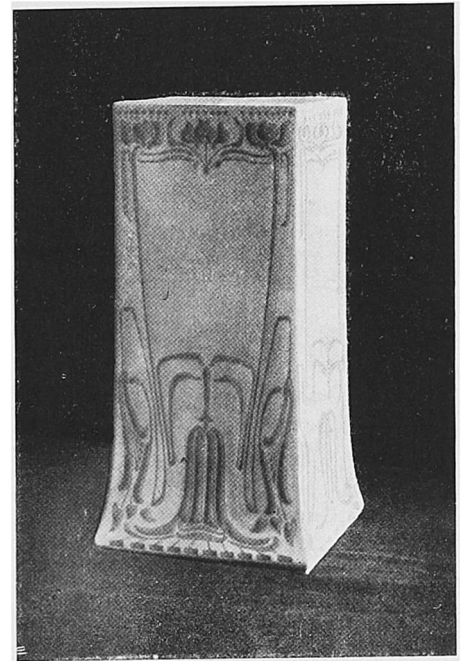


EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE
BY HENRI NOCQ

a fine relief and lustre. Mlle. d'Heureux shows an interesting lace fan in several colours. M. L. P. H. Bonvallet has some very good screens, notably that representing water, with a boldly designed plant in the foreground, and fishing-boats in the distance, the general scheme of colour being in greys, with a very pleasant light green effect in the sails and the ripples on the sea. In wall papers, M. Duvinage's work is certainly the best. Unfortunately, I have



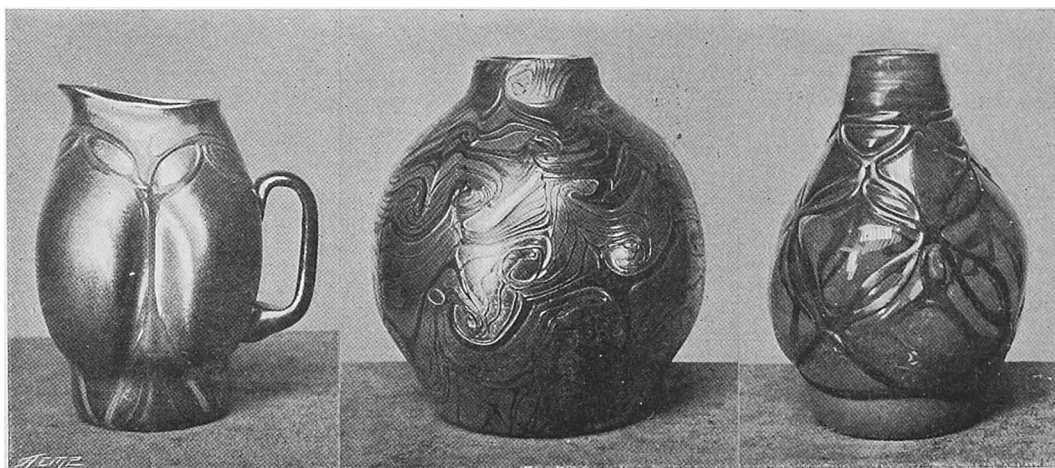
A VASE
BY G. DE FEURE



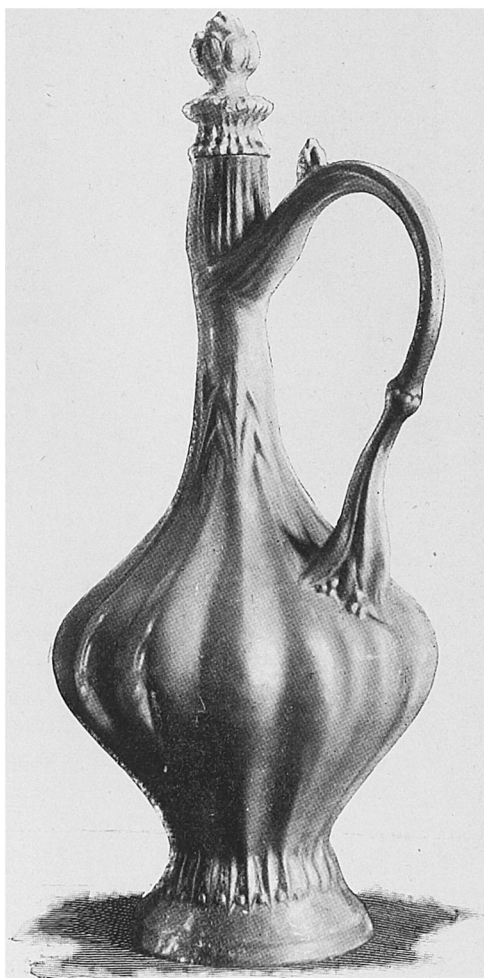
A VASE
BY G. DE FEURE

not been able to obtain illustrations for this month. He has notably a charming design of a paper for a school room, in which an audacious motive is most successfully carried out—a group of boys at lessons in the foreground, and above, babies in amusing quaint caps playing on the sand. The description of the design sounds fantastic, but the execution is extremely effective, as well as amusing

THE PARIS SALON



TIFFANY LUSTRE GLASS

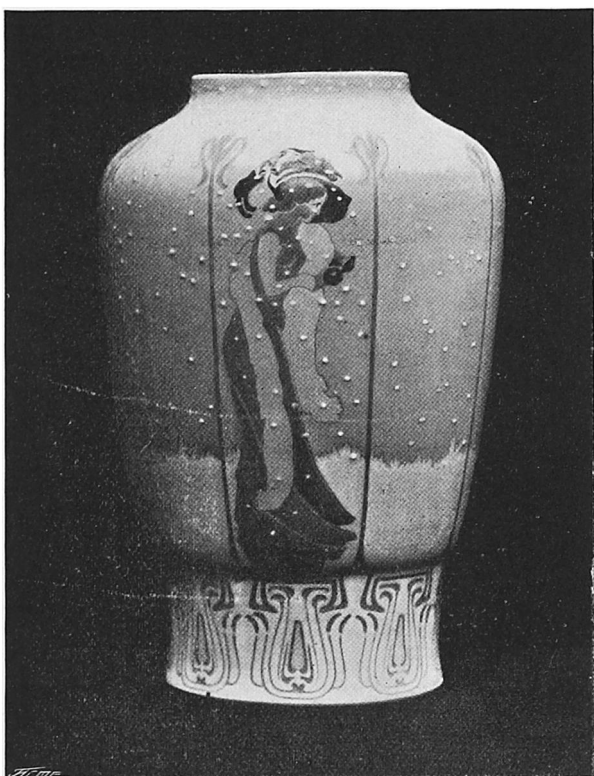


LILY OF THE VALLEY FLAGGON IN PEWTER
BY LOUIS BOUCHER



ASTER LAMP IN PEWTER
BY LOUIS BOUCHER

FURNITURE



A VASE
BY G. DE FEURE

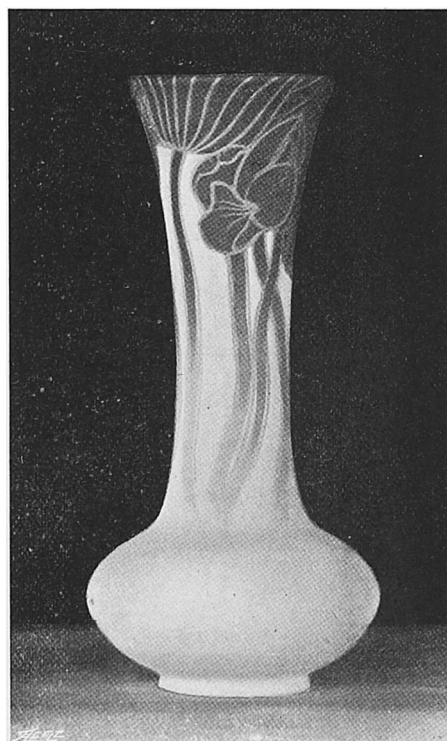
and new. Another paper, with a design of children and their nurses, in the picturesque French costume, is equally good.

The chief piece of furniture shown is the bedroom by M. Delovincourt. The design in this cannot be described as remarkably original,



A VASE
FROM THE ROOKWOOD POTTERY

as it will be particularly familiar to English artists, but the workmanship, which is well nigh perfect, is alone well worth study. Moreover, some of the details of the design are more or less original, and all are admirable as regards execution. The central table, with the glass decanter upon it and the small closed shelf above, and the lamp and candlestick on the corner ledges, ought especially to be mentioned for perfection.



A VASE
'FROM THE ROOKWOOD POTTERY'

of workmanship, besides the wood panelling, which is excellent. An unfortunate, not to say irritating, detail, is the leaning head surmounting the back panel, an obvious mistake. I have selected M. Carabin's piano for illustration, in spite of the fact that the same error is committed in the design, even more glaringly than in M. Delovincourt's bedroom. It would be quite impossible to play on an instrument, from which female figures in such attitudes emerge on all sides. The work is interesting in the abstract, however, the

ADAM DECORATION

PIANO
DESIGNED BY
T. R. CARABIN



sculptures being very fine, the wood, in a slightly reddish tone, most handsome, and the carpentering and joining quite perfect. It is also a valuable lesson which will teach a fine artist to refrain next time from purely abstract decoration, to study the question of practical usefulness, and to understand its importance. Among other exhibits must be mentioned: M. Lachenal's effective panelling in wood and earthenware, the design of bright foliage in the latter material let into the wood, which is generally dark, being most satisfactory; M. Tony Selmersheim's sofa, convenient, though complicated and rather cumbersome, provided with all sorts of small drawers, within reach of the sitter's hand, and surmounted by a mirror; M. J. Palti's plain, simple, and sturdy drawing-room set, in dark wood and leather; MM. Sorel and Aubert's dining-room furniture in pale yellowish ash, the chief interest in which lies in the good colour and fine joining of the wood; lastly, the seat above mentioned, which bears no exhibitor's name, and which is, as regards simplicity and originality, one of the best pieces in the Salon, the square shape, with wooden arms at each corner stretching from the base along the deep couch seats to about two feet above where they meet over a circular stand for a plant, being extremely good.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

'ADAM DECORATION'

UNDER the title of 'The Decorative Work of Robert and James Adam,' Mr. B. T. Batsford has just published a new and enlarged edition* of the successful publication, 'Works in Architecture, by the Brothers Adam,' which made its appearance—and went rapidly out of print—about twenty years ago when, before the establishment of the Arts and Crafts Society and the return to a simpler form of decoration, the revival of the decorative style of the latter half of the eighteenth century was making rapid strides and had almost reached its zenith. The brothers Adam are the most typical representatives of the British 'Empire' style, which, in fact, has been called after them the 'Adam style,' and the examples of their architectural designs, chimney pieces, cornices, ceilings, mirrors, side-tables, clocks, lamps, etc., reproduced in Mr. Batsford's volume, cannot fail to be of the greatest interest to all architects and designers, even if the 'Adam style' does not correspond with modern ideas of decoration.

* *The Decorative Work of Robert and James Adam.*
(London: B. T. Batsford, 1901.)